



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

3430 Courthouse Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 ■ 410-313-2013 Voice/Relay

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive
cball@howardcountymd.gov

www.howardcountymd.gov
FAX 410-313-3051

February 21, 2020

Delegate Kumar Barve, Chairman
Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Testimony **IN SUPPORT** of House Bill 203 – Community Parks and Playgrounds Program –
Baltimore County and Howard County - Expansion

Dear Chairman Barve,

Howard County is known for its high quality of life and diverse communities. Our Recreation and Parks department and park facilities manages 9,159 acres of public lands and more than 50 parks that are widely utilized by our residents and visitors across the country. We take pride and value in our natural spaces and have a long-term commitment to improving the lives of our residents through providing outdoor recreation opportunities and enhancing the well-being of our community.

Program Open Space is a commitment to conserving our state's natural resources and the Community Parks and Play Ground Program invests in our local communities to develop and revitalize parks. Both Program Open Space and Community Parks and Playgrounds funding are the main grant programs that fund capital projects for our county Recreation and Parks programs. Initially, both Howard and Baltimore County were eligible to apply for Community Parks and Playground (CCP) funding and grants. Between Fiscal Years 2003 through 2008, Howard County was awarded \$569,035 to fund projects in four parks including, Rockburn Park, Cedar Lane East, Lisbon and Blandair Regional.

Due to changes in state law in 2008, both Howard and Baltimore County became the only two jurisdictions in the State of Maryland that are now ineligible for CPP funding due to our lack of municipalities. If passed, HB 203 would allow for our counties to apply for CPP grant funding from that will support much needed future funding to replace existing aging infrastructure in our communities and parks such as playgrounds, bridges, ADA compliant renovations and expanding pathways that connect our communities. Additional funding will also allow for the County to continue to address community needs and the completion of the remaining phases of two regional parks, Troy and Blandair Park, East Columbia Park utilized by residents in neighboring jurisdictions as well.

In 2019, Howard County was ranked one of the Top 10 Healthiest Counties in the nation by U.S. News and World Report, in part because of our commitment to advancing the health of all residents while committing to preserving our natural environment. We manage, protect and conserve our resources, not only for a sustainable future but for a sustainable and vibrant community.

For these and many other reasons, I ask for your support and passage of House Bill 203.

All the Best,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive